

Monday 12/7/04

Friday 16/7/04

1st Chuck/Terry 70%
 2nd Hans/Dave 67%

1st Kevin/Noreen 61%
 2nd Dave/Terry 59%

Bidding Quiz**Standard American is assumed unless otherwise stated.**

Hand A	Hand B	With Hand A partner opens 1♣. You respond 1♥ and partner then bids 1NT (12-14), what do you do?
♠ K76	♠ Q9873	
♥ AK42	♥ A6432	With Hand B RHO opens 1♦, what do you do?
♦ AJ42	♦ 75	
♣ K9	♣ 6	
Hand C	Hand D	With Hand C partner opens 1♣ and RHO overcalls 1♠. What do you bid?
♠ 73	♠ KQJ5	
♥ A963	♥ A9	With Hand D RHO opens 1♦, what do you do?
♦ KJ5	♦ KJ72	
♣ AKJ7	♣ J53	
Hand E	Hand F	With Hand E you open 1♣. Partner responds 1♥ and so you obviously rebid 1NT. Partner then bids 4NT, what do you do?
♠ AQ9	♠ Q76	
♥ Q6	♥ 953	With Hand F partner opens 1♣. (a) what do you bid?
♦ 763	♦ AKJ6532	(b) Suppose that you bid 1♦. Partner rebids 1NT, what now?
♣ A8653	♣ -	
Hand G	Hand H	With Hand G partner opens 1♦, what do you do?
♠ 1063	♠ J10974	With Hand H you choose to open with 1♠. Partner bids 2♦ and you bid 2♥. Partner then bids 3NT, what do you do?
♥ 653	♥ AQ532	So 1♠ - 2♦ - 2♥ - 3NT - ?
♦ Q6	♦ K	
♣ K10984	♣ 64	
Hand J	Hand K	(a) What do you open with Hand J?
♠ 85	♠ AK4	(b) Suppose that you choose 1♦, then what is your rebid after partner bids 1♠?
♥ K6	♥ AQ4	
♦ KQ1098	♦ J75	With Hand K LHO opens 1NT and RHO bids 2♥ (transfer). You pass, LHO bids 2♠ and RHO bids 4♠. What do you do?
♣ AQ98	♣ J732	
Hand L	Hand M	With Hand L partner opens 1NT, what do you bid?
♠ 9	♠ A10532	With Hand M you open 1♠. Partner bids 2♣ and you rebid 2♥. Partner then bids 3♠, what should you do?
♥ 103	♥ QJ765	
♦ A9872	♦ A54	
♣ AJ874	♣ -	

How many points for slam?

Board 11 from Monday 12th, love all.

North (A) South (E)

♠ K76 ♠ AQ9
♥ AK42 ♥ Q6
♦ AJ42 ♦ 763
♣ K9 ♣ A8653

Table A:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣ (1)
pass	1♥ (2)	pass	1NT (3)
pass	4♣ (4)	pass	4♠
pass	6NT	all pass	

Table B:

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♣ (1)
pass	1♥ (2)	pass	1NT (3)
pass	4NT (4)	pass	pass (5)
pass			

To slam or not to slam? That is the question. Let's look at the bidding at these two tables: -

Table A: (1) A minimal but sound opener, it conforms to the rule of 20.
(2) It's probably a matter of style if you respond 1♦ or 1♥.
(3) 12-14, obvious.
(4) Crunch time. A very respectable 18 count. Reasonable shape and all those aces and kings make this quite a nice hand. So off to slam? This West thought so and 4♣ is Gerber, the ace ask, after partner's last bid was NT.

Table B: The same start but this time North did not insist upon slam at (4). As I said, this is a decent 18 count but opposite a flat 12-14 you need about 21 points to insist upon a NT slam. This 4NT bid is quantitative and asks partner to bid the slam with a maximum. South is minimum and so passed at (5).

And what happened? The hand was played 4 times and the hopeless 6NT was reached at two tables, down one. 4NT made exactly and a fourth table managed to find 6♥, down two.

The bottom lines: -

- 4♣ is the ace ask after partner's last bid was NT, 4NT is a natural raise.
- 4NT is the ace ask when a suit has been agreed.
- With two balanced hands you need a combined 33 points to make 6NT.
- So you need 21+ points to insist upon slam opposite 12-14.
- With a good 19-20 you can invite (with 4NT) opposite 12-14.

This actual North hand is at the lower limit for an invitational 4NT raise and 3NT would also be very reasonable; forcing to slam is a gross overbid. Good show Chuck (he was the North who chose 4NT) and thus scored a clear top despite the fact that his partner made one trick less than everybody else.

If you look back at previous news-sheets (and two pages further on in this sheet) you will see slam making with less points, but that is only when you have a **fit** or a good long suit.

I'll just use up this space to say what you need to look for a 6NT when partner opens a strong NT (so 15-17) and you have a flat hand with no 4 card major: -

10-15	bid 3NT
16-17	bid 4NT – quantitative
18+	Gerber.

An unusual Unusual NT?

Board 15 from Monday 12th.

Dealer:	♠ 5	West	North	East	South (A)
South	♥ QJ987				
N-S vul	♦ 98542	-	-	-	1♠ (1)
	♣ Q3	2NT (2)	pass (3)	3♣	3♥ (4)
		5♣	5♥	pass	pass
♠ A	N	6♣	dbl	all pass	
♥ 6	W E				
♦ AQ103	S				
♣ AKJ7642					
	♠ K10974				
	♥ AK1032				
	♦ J7				
	♣ 5				

An unusual auction, let's analyse it: -

- (1) 1♠ is correct when 5-5 in the majors.
- (2) The Unusual NT (UNT). It is generally a weak hand promising at least 5-5 in the minors.
- (3) North enquired about the bid and was informed by East that it was weak with both minors.
- (4) South asked if the UNT could be strong, and East again replied that it was weak. It would be nice to have a little more, but West's pre-empt (ho-ho) has raised the level.

What can I say? Let's start with a quote from news-sheet 70.

UNT (and Michaels cue bids) are probably the most abused conventions out there; they should promise 5-5 (or maybe 6-5) in the specified suits; not 5-4, not 6-4 etc. They are generally weak bids, but if you bid again then many experienced players play that they were actually strong.

Something new for the club. I will be giving a prize to the first player who actually makes an UNT (or Michaels) bid with the correct hand type. An enormous 7-4 most certainly does not qualify.

So what should I say about West's bid? I guess that you can play UNT as either weak or very strong (this treatment is more common with Michaels) – but the opponents are entitled to know! Anyway, 7-4 is not a suitable shape. Perhaps people need to re-read the extract from News-sheet 70. Do not play UNT (or Michaels) if you are simply going to abuse the convention.

Anyway, E-W (a fairly regular partnership of two experienced players) need to discuss this. If they wish to play that the bids may be very strong then they must alert and inform the opposition. Any repeat without such an alert will be treated as a partnership understanding and will receive a warning and an adjusted score. East was not impressed when I stated this at the table, but then we have different views on almost everything – I suggest that he re-read the rules. This is, of course, very similar to the saga of news-sheet 78 (the atrocious 4♦ overcall) – and three of the players are the same!

If you happen to play with a partner with a different bidding style from your own and the opposition ask about your partner's bid, do not reply with what the bid would mean if you made it, but what it means when partner has made it!

The prize has gone!

Board 1 from Monday 12th.

Dealer: ♠ KJ62
North ♥ J109
Love all ♦ 64
♣ 10432

♠ A1054 N
♥ 7 W E
♦ J1093 S
♣ AJ75

♠ Q9873
♥ A6432
♦ 75
♣ 6

♠ -
♥ KQ85
♦ AKQ82
♣ KQ98

Table A

West	North	East	South (B)
-	pass	1♦	2♦ (1)
2♠ (2)	pass (3)	3NT	pass
pass	pass		

A possible auction

West	North	East	South
-	pass	1♦	pass
1♠	pass	3♣ (4)	pass
3♦ (5)	pass	3♠ (6)	pass
4♣ (6)	pass	4♦ (7)	pass
4♠ (8)	pass	6♦	all pass

The easy slam (6♣ or 6♦) was missed at every table on Monday. I only know the auction at Table A: -

- (1) 2♦ is a Michaels Cue Bid. Weak (about 6-11 pts) and usually 5-5 in the majors. This is obviously a classic hand for the bid and so the prize offered on the previous page has gone.
- (2) West did not bother to ask about the bid (South promises ♠'s) but simply bid his ♠ suit. Anyway, the damage had been done and it's difficult for E-W to reach the slam now after the pre-emptive interference. If West had not bid 2♠ then North would have bid 3♠ or 4♠ at (3) to make life difficult.

Nobody bid the slam, so I give a possible auction if there was no interference: -

3♣ at (4) is game forcing and so West can simply bid 3♦ at (5) to set trumps. 3♠ at (6) is a cue bid as is 4♣. East bids 4♦ at (7) because he would like to hear a 4♥ cue bid (in which case 7♣/♦ is there). West's 4♠ cue bid at (8) denies the ♥A and so East settles for 6♦.

And note what I said earlier about the points for slam. Here it's 29 but slam is a doddle because there is a **fit**. Swap the ♠A with the ♥7 and 7♣/♦ is cold. Yet nobody even made a try for slam! Funny game bridge. Three pairs bid slam on that flat garbage earlier and yet nobody even made an effort with these superb hands.

And what happened? 3NT was bid at 3 tables (making +1 or +2) and it was 5♦ +1 at the 4th table.

The bottom lines: -

- If you need just one card for slam (♣A or ♥A here) then make an effort!
- If you have the *correct shape* and **point count**, consider the UNT and Michaels conventions.
- The Michaels cue bid is weak (6-11) with at least 5-4 (but usually 5-5) in the majors.

Asking for a stop

Board 14 from Monday 12th.

Dealer: ♠ 73
East ♥ A963
Love all ♦ KJ5
♣ AKJ7

♠ AQJ86 N ♠ 10954
♥ J75 W E ♥ 1082
♦ Q432 S ♦ 1086
♣ 8 ♣ 943

♠ K2
♥ KQ4
♦ A97
♣ Q10652

Table A

West	North (C)	East	South
-	-	pass	1♣
1♠	dbl (1)	2♠	pass (2)
pass	3♠ (3)	pass	3NT
all pass			

Table B

West	North (C)	East	South
-	-	pass	1♣
1♠	2♥ (1)	2♠	3♥
pass	4♥	all pass	

3NT by South is the best spot: -

- Table A: (1) This is a negative double. If West had passed, North would have bid 1♥, promising 6+ points and 4+ ♠'s. A negative double of 1♠ says *exactly* the same. You cannot bid 2♥ as that promises 5 ♥'s.
(2) South is non-min and 2NT is an option, However, I would prefer to have a little more as partner may have only 6 points.
(3) This is game forcing and asking for a ♠ stop.

Table B: This pair presumably do not play negative doubles? So North has bundles of points and bid 2♥. OK?

No. A 2♥ bid is forcing but is wrong on two counts: -

1- it promises a 5 card suit and partner will support with just 3 (as in this case). 2- South may have a ♠ tenace vulnerable to the opening lead (as in this case).

And what happened? 3NT made 12 or 13 tricks the 3 times it was bid. 4♥ is a poor contract but somehow they managed 12 tricks, presumably East did not lead the obvious ♠? But even with this mis-defence 4♥ +2 scored a clear bottom.

The bottom lines: -

- If partner opens 1♠ and you bid 2♥ then that promises 5+ ♥'s
- Read up on negative doubles.

Who should bid NT?

Board 13 from Monday 12th.

Dealer: ♠ 1063
North ♥ 653
Both vul ♦ Q6
♣ K10984

♠ KQJ5 N ♠ 974
♥ A9 W E ♥ Q842
♦ KJ72 S ♦ 54
♣ J53 ♣ A762
♠ A82
♥ KJ107
♦ A10983
♣ Q

Table A

West (D)	North (G)	East	South
-	pass	pass	1♦
pass (1)	1NT (2)	all pass	

Table B

West	North	East	South
-	pass	pass	1♦
1♠ (1)	pass	pass	2♥ (3)
all pass			

Table C

West	North	East	South
-	pass	pass	1♦
1NT (1)	all pass		

Table A: So what did you bid at (1) with Hand D in this week's quiz? Pass is not the answer (see Table C). And what did you bid at (2) with Hand G in this week's quiz?

5 points is normally insufficient to respond, but this hand is worth more. 1098 in a 5 card suit is worth a point. So this North correctly bid 1NT.

Table B: Now it is permissible to overcall with a *good* 4 card suit at the *one* level. This is only when you have a good holding in the opener's suit (so you cannot double), but it does not apply if a 1NT overcall is an option. And what about South's 2♥ bid at (3)? It shows a strong hand with 4♥'s and 5♦'s but I don't like it for two reasons: -

1- It is not strong enough.

2- If you play negative doubles then partner has denied 5+ pts with 4♥'s.

Table C: This West got it right and overcalled 1NT (15-18).

And what happened? 2♥ went two down for a bottom. 1NT by West made exactly the two times it was played. At Table A the defence went astray (setting up declarer's ♣'s for him) and North made 10 tricks. So this North made 4 more tricks than the other two N-S's – sometimes it is a big advantage to be declarer, especially if the defence do not take their signalling seriously.

The bottom lines: -

- If 1NT describes your hand then bid it.
- A 1NT overcall is 15-18 with a good stop(s) in the suit opened.
- It is perfectly acceptable to by-pass a 4 card major to overcall 1NT. This is not denying a 4 card major and partner can still use Stayman as if you had opened 1NT.
- A suit like K10984 is worth far more than 3 points.
- Use your signalling method when defending – it can make the difference between a contract going down or making 3 overtricks!

What do you need to double game?

Board 23 from Friday 16th.

Dealer:	♠ QJ10732	
South	♥ 75	
Both vul	♦ A4	
	♣ K105	
♠ 96	N	♠ AK4
♥ J109832	W E	♥ AQ4
♦ 632	S	♦ J75
♣ 64		♣ J732
	♠ 85	
	♥ K6	
	♦ KQ1098	
	♣ AQ98	

Table A

West	North	East (K)	South (J)
-	-	-	1NT (1)
pass	2♥	pass	2♠
pass	4♠ (2)	dbl (3)	4NT (4)
pass	pass	dbl	all pass

Table B

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♦ (1)
pass	1♠	pass	1NT (5)
pass	2♠	all pass	

An unusual auction at Table A, let's analyse it: -

Table A:

- (1) So what did you open with Hand J at (1) in this week's quiz? I was South and chose 1NT - see my answers to the bidding quiz if you don't like this.
- (2) A transfer followed by a jump to 4 of the major promises game values and a 6 card suit. See how easy it is to reach the correct contract if South opens 1NT.
- (3) But East did not think it was the correct contract! What did you bid with Hand K? See what I think of this double in the bidding quiz answers.
- (4) So should South pull it (to 4NT) or not? A close call. I expected East to have something like ♠ AQ1096 in ♠'s for his double (that's what he should have) and with these nice minors I elected to bid 4NT.

Table B: Here South started with 1♦, the choice of many I suspect. And 1NT (or 2♣) are OK at (5) if you think that the South hand is 14 points.

And what happened? 4NT doubled at Table A made +1 for a score in the thousands. And at other tables? Nobody else was in 4♠ - I guess nobody else opened 1NT? 2♠ made +2 at Table B and West went for 500 in 4♥ doubled at the third table.

The bottom lines: -

- Do not double a freely bid game unless you have a surprise for the opponents. AKx of trumps and another ace is not a surprise. Something like AQ1096 sitting over the guy with the suit is.
- And even with such a surprise it may be best not to double if they can run into NT.
- Transfer followed by 4 of the major shows a 6 card suit. This North hand is a classic example.
- Intermediates in long suits are a big +. Upgrade such a hand.
- With 2245 or 2254 shape and 15-17 points (after evaluation!), think about a 1NT opening.
- Some experts say that you should open 1NT with 2245 but 1♦ with 2254 as you have an easy 2♣ rebid. I'm not so sure, the 2♣ rebid could be way less than 15-17 points.

And a final word for the points pundits (who think that the South hand is 14 points).

3NT or 4♠ make easily on a mis-fitting '24' points. And why did they stop in 2♠ at Table B? - because the South hand is too good.

If 3NT is an option, bid it! Part 1Board 12 from Friday 16th, N-S vul

West	East (F)	West	North	East	South .
♠ KJ85	♠ Q76	1♣	pass	1♦ (1)	pass
♥ A862	♥ 953	1NT	pass	2♦ (2)	pass
♦ 98	♦ AKJ6532	pass	pass		
♣ KQ2	♣ -				

3NT is the best spot, what went wrong?

- (1) I was asked the correct bid here. Most players play that 2♦ is a strong bid here and it's perhaps a matter of style if you bid 2♦ with this hand. I would prefer to have more points for a jump shift and I too would bid 1♦.
- (2) But what now? 2♦ is a weak bid and this hand is far too good. 3♦ (invitational) is a possibility (it's a bit too good). But you know me, I hate to end up in 3♦ or 5♦ if 3NT may make. I would bid 3NT.

And what happened? 2♦ made +2. 3NT was bid and made +1 at another table.

The bottom line. With a long (semi)solid minor, think about 3NT – I think I've said that before?

If 3NT is an option, bid it! Part 2Board 17 from Friday 16th, love all

North (L)	South	West	North	East	South .
♠ 9	♠ AQ72	-	pass	pass	1NT
♥ 103	♥ AQ64	pass	3NT	pass	pass
♦ A9872	♦ Q6	pass			
♣ AJ874	♣ K52				

When dummy appeared East asked me if I thought that 3NT was a good bid. Do you? What did you bid with hand L in this week's quiz?. East considered the singleton and doubleton in a NT contract to be bad and thought that perhaps the hand was only worth an invitational bid?

Actually the reverse is true. Look on the positive side and forget those negative waves. This North hand has two very good 5 card suits, and aces are good cards. The hand is well worth 3NT and simply bidding 3NT is better than messing about in the minors.

And what happened? 3NT made +3 and made +1 at another table. At the 3rd table they went two down in 6♣, presumably North bid his ♣ suit?

The bottom lines: -

- Think positive
- Long minor suit(s) usually play well in NT
- 5 card suit(s) headed by the ace are a good++

And finally, for both of these hands - If 3NT is a sensible option, bid it.

A jump to 3NT means that you want to play there!

North (H)	South	Board 13 from Friday 16 th , both vul.			
♠ J10974	♠ A	West	North	East	South
♥ AQ532	♥ 109	-	1♠ (1)	pass	2♦
♦ K	♦ AJ10753	pass	2♥ (2)	pass	3NT
♣ 64	♣ K1073	pass	4♥ (3)	all pass	

3NT is the best spot, what went wrong?

- (1) Would you open this hand? It's borderline; the J109 in a 5 card suit are a +, but a singleton king is a -. Anyway, I'm not arguing.
- (3) But I am arguing here. What did you bid at (3) with hand H in this week's quiz? The 2♥ bid at (2) promises 4 or 5 ♥'s and partner's jump to 3NT says that he is not interested in either of opener's suits. The 3NT bid is often based on a decent long minor and the ♦K is a great card. Also, if partner was remotely interested in ♥'s (say 3 card support) then he would bid 3♣ (4th suit forcing) at his 2nd turn. North should pass at (3).

And what happened? 4♥ went minus two. 3NT was bid and made at another table and 2♠ (by East!) was minus two at the third.

The bottom line. When partner *jumps* to 3NT he is not interested in your suits and it's usually best not to bid on without a very good reason.

Shortage in partner's suit is bad

North (M)	South	Board 9 from Friday 16 th , E-W vul			
♠ A10532	♠ KJ8	West	North	East	South
♥ QJ765	♥ 9	-	1♠	pass	2♣ (1)
♦ A54	♦ KQ87	pass	2♥	pass	3♠ (2)
♣ -	♣ 108752	pass	4♠ (3)	pass	

4♠ went two down, so who overbid?

- (1) This is close, 2♠ would be reasonable but this South reasoned that his trumps are good and with a singleton it's worth 3♠. The way to show that the 3♠ raise is just 3 cards is to bid another suit and bid 3♠ next go. That's what this South planned to do. I'm not arguing.
- (2) And that's what he did. Correct? I'm not so sure now. He had a borderline 3♠ raise at (1) but now that partner has bid his short suit it's not now worth 3♠, 2♠ is better.
- (3) And what about this acceptance with 4♠? What did you bid with Hand M in this week's quiz? Normally a good hand with a void, but a void in partner's suit is not a + factor! A void in partner's suit is usually of little use and so this hand has just 11 points and should pass 3♠.

So both players overbid. What's more, since everybody was in 4♠ going down it looks like half the players in the club overbid!

The bottom line? Shortage in partner's suit is not an asset.

Bidding Quiz Answers

- Hand A: 3NT or 4NT. The hand is borderline for an invitational 4NT bid. What's more, it is nowhere near good enough to launch into slam (4♣ is the ace ask here), which is what 3 people did on Monday.
- Hand B: 2♦, a Michaels Cue Bid. If you do not play Michaels Cue Bids then I guess that you could overcall (1♠?). But you cannot then later introduce your ♥ suit as that would show a much stronger hand.
- Hand C: Double. A negative double. If you bid 2♥ then that shows a 5 card suit. The other problem with 2♥ is that an initial ♠ lead will go through partner. If you do not play negative doubles then it's difficult and you would have to bid 2♦.
- Hand D: 1NT. 15-18 with a ♦ stop(s).
- Hand E: Pass. Partner's 4NT is quantitative, looking for slam if you are maximum. This hand is minimum and so passes. If partner wanted to know about your aces he would have bid 4♣, Gerber.
- Hand F: (a) 1♦. I prefer this to 2♦ (I would like more high cards for 2♦).
(b) 3NT. 2♦ and 3♦ are not forcing and I want to be in game. As I have frequently said, 3NT is usually better than 5♦ when you have a long suit.
- Hand G: 1NT. 6-10 points and no 4 card major. This hand is worth 6 points because the K1098x is a good +. Also the ♦Qx in partners suit is good and the ♠10 may be worth something.
- Hand H: Pass. Partner's jump to 3NT says that he is not interested in your suits.
- Hand J: (a) 1NT. This hand is not 14 points, if you think that it is, then have another look. The 5 card suit (KQ1098) is huge - 1098 in a 5 card suit is most certainly worth a point or two. And the other 4 card suit is worth more than its face value with the 98. The hand is worth 16 points and it is often good to protect a tenace (♥Kx and ♣AQ here) by opening 1NT. But the over-riding reason for opening 1NT is
(b) ...I don't know what to rebid after opening 1♦! If you open 1♦ then what is your rebid over 1♥/♠? 2♣ is perhaps a bit feeble and a game forcing 3♣ is certainly too much. A 1NT rebid is 12-14 (this hand is too good) and 2NT is 18-19. That is why it's usually best to open 1NT when your hand is within your NT range and (semi) balanced.
- Hand K: Pass. Double is terrible. You have 3 sure tricks, but that's all; the ♥K is probably sitting over your ♥Q. The opponents have freely bid to game and your partner is surely bust.
- Hand L: 3NT. Now I'm sure that somebody out there will tell you that there is a convention where 3♣ shows a hand 5-5 in the minors and weak; and 3♦ shows a hand 5-5 in the minors and strong. I am a fan of good conventions but this one is not good in my view. Anyway, is this hand weak or strong? I'm a simple soul, I don't want to play in 3 of a minor, I don't want to play in 5 of a minor, I want to play in 3NT; so that's what I would bid. And that's what Dave, my partner, did bid at the table.
- Hand M: Pass. If partner had bid anything but ♣'s then this hand is worth a shot at game; but shortage in partner's suit is bad and so this hand should pass.